

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

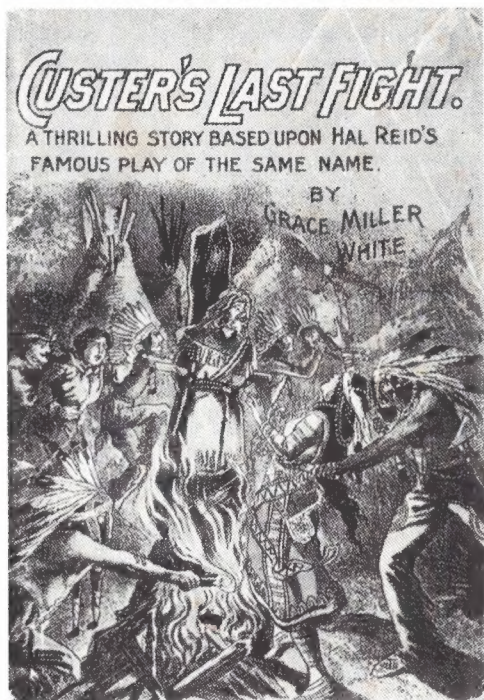
A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and study of old-time dime and nickel novels, popular story papers, series books, and pulp magazines

Vol. 64, No. 2

April 1995

Whole No. 632

DIME NOVEL SKETCHES



No. 271: RAILROAD SERIES

Publisher: J. S. Ogilvie, 59 Rose St., New York. Issues: 129. Dates: Undated (late 1900s to early 1920s); Schedule: Not stated (probably monthly). Size: 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 5 inches. Pages: 300-400. Price: 35c. Illustrations: Colored pictorial cover. Contents: Contemporary novels including stories by Bertha M. Clay, Laura Jean Libbey, Charles Garvice and other romances. Also included were detective and western stories and novelizations of popular plays.



THE HITCHING POST

The problems faced by editors of magazines like the *Dime Novel Round-Up* include having enough material and meeting deadlines. So far, so good. We have a healthy inventory, supplied us by papers from conferences as well as ones we commission. Doug Rossman's article in this issue is an example of the latter. We don't go to press until the draft copy of the issue has been proofread by Didi Johnson and we are grateful for her contribution. We are also grateful to Brian KenKnight for getting the copies into their envelopes (along with any subscription renewal notices) and properly labeling them. We also enjoy excellent service provided by the local Post Office.

We have many ideas for future issues. Some of them (like the "Popular Publishers" series) come out of research for the *Dime Novel Companion*, a work in progress. Others are a bi-product of our reading. It's amazing what you discover when reading dime novels, series books, or pulp magazines. This material may have been written several generations ago, but it is still alive.

Even with the newer technology, putting together each issue is a bit like doing a jigsaw puzzle. Fortunately, we've always enjoyed jigsaw puzzles. If there are any pieces missing from this issue, perhaps you will find them next time.

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BIOLOGICAL BOMBA-AST; or, A *REAL* OLD NATURALIST'S SECRET

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Curator of Reptiles
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For 13 years (1926-1938), the pseudonymous Roy Rockwood thrilled and chilled his young readers with the adventures of Bomba the Jungle Boy. Bomba was an American boy who had been kidnapped as a small child, then rescued and raised in the depths of the Amazonian jungle by an elderly naturalist named Cody Casson. Fourteen years of age when his recorded adventures began, Bomba soon becomes aware of *what* he is ("white"—as the reader is constantly reminded in what would be recognized nowadays as being an offensively racist manner) and spends much of his time and effort attempting to discover *who* he is. Cody Casson knows Bomba's parents and could have revealed the boy's history, but fortunately for the plot (if unfortunately for Bomba) the old naturalist had suffered a serious head injury when his rifle exploded, and thereafter Casson could not recall more than bits and snatches of his—or Bomba's—past life. Seeking one or both of his lost parents is Bomba's chief *raison d'être* throughout the series, which was masterfully reviewed in 1983 by Kent Winslow.¹

It is not my intention to retrace the path already so effectively blazed by Winslow. Rather, I wish to examine in detail the barrage of biological misinformation that Rockwood fires at his young readers. Although an occasional mistake might reasonably be expected from an author who lacks biological training, it would appear that Rockwood made no attempt whatsoever to check his facts. As a result, most of what he had to say about wild animals is grossly exaggerated or absolutely incorrect. To make matters worse (if that were possible), when Clover Books reissued the first nine Bomba books, each back cover bore the statement: "The BOMBA BOOKS are fast-moving adventure stories with a good deal of authentic nature lore." It is impossible to know if the writer of that advertising blurb was as ignorant as Rockwood seems to have been or simply didn't care what falsehoods Clover Books foisted on an unsuspecting public. In any event, the time has come for a *real* old naturalist (I've been a professional zoologist for 34 years) to set the record straight.

As Winslow has pointed out, Rockwood has a really negative fixation on reptiles—at times it seems as if Bomba can't pass a day without being threatened by some deadly serpent or crocodilian. (In reality, herpetologists who are actively looking for snakes in the rain forest may go weeks without seeing any.) These encounters are always described in the most lurid, and usually inaccurate, terms possible . . . as if the adjectives could help to evoke an overwhelming sense of repulsion and dread in the reader. Snakes are invariably described as being "slimy" (in point of fact, their skin is dry) and having "slavering" jaws or fangs. (Snakes don't drool, and their fangs don't drip venom when their mouths are open—that would be a wasteful use of a limited resource.) Both an anaconda and a boa constrictor are said to have "fangs," although the author clearly recognized that both species are non-poisonous. (The term "fang" is restricted to those teeth that are actually modified for conducting venom.)

Rockwood has anacondas, boas, vipers, and mambas responding to a variety of sounds such as shouts, explosions, a bowstring breaking, singing, and music from a harmonica and from a horn. (Snakes can only detect low-frequency vibrations transmitted via the ground, not high-frequency airborne vibrations.) An anaconda is said to make "a horrible sound, half hiss, half bellow. . . ." (No snake bellows.)

Death by constriction seems to have held a morbid fascination for the author. He believed that the only hope one had to avoid having his bones broken and being crushed into a shapeless mass by an anaconda or a boa once it had wrapped around its victim was if the snake couldn't anchor its tail for leverage. (Snakes that kill by constriction do not anchor their tails—they don't need to; also, they kill by preventing their prey from breathing—not by breaking its bones and crushing it shapeless.) In *Bomba the Jungle Boy in the Abandoned City* (1927), Bomba finds evidence of a "feast of serpents" in the form of a number of skeletons scattered about. (The digestive juices of snakes break down bone as well as flesh.) The bite of some unspecified snake is said to cause rabies in monkeys (but snakes do not carry the rabies virus).

Several references are made to a snake's eyes "glittering," "gleaming," or "glowing," and changing in appearance. Such eyes may become "red with fury," "wicked," or "glazed with a white film." (Snakes' eyes do not change in appearance save just prior to shedding when they become opaque for a few days; they are never red—with fury or otherwise—and never glitter, gleam, or glow . . . especially in the dark, as an anaconda's eyes are said to do in *Bomba the Jungle Boy on the Underground River* (1930); and to deem the eyes "wicked" is simply projection of a human attribute by the author.)

On several occasions, Bomba encounters snakes far underground. (Snakes don't live in lightless areas except when hibernating). Several snakes are said to usually travel in pairs (but none do save for a very brief period when mating). In the first book (*Bomba the Jungle Boy*) there is a reference to a "nest of snakes". (Snakes are basically solitary except when mating or hibernating—and the snakes Bomba encounters certainly aren't doing the latter, assuming that Amazonian snakes ever do.) Rockwood also had an exaggerated notion of how fast snakes can crawl. In that first book, Bomba is chased by a *cooanaradi*,² which he knows will eventually catch him because of its endurance, and in *Lost Explorers* (1930) he is pursued through the jungle by an anaconda that "can move faster than we". (Perhaps an anaconda could outrace a human in the water, but no snake could do so on land unless the human was impeded in some fashion; among terrestrial vertebrates, humans—at least those in good condition—actually are remarkable for their powers of endurance as runners.)

In *Underground River*, we are told that a *cooanaradi* has wrapped its coils around Bomba's body and it "seemed as though they would crush his bones" (the bushmaster does not constrict). A boa constrictor in *Lost Explorers* kills a headhunter and prepares to swallow him. (No boa is large enough to ingest a human.) Bomba fears an anaconda may come wandering by the hut in his absence and kill Casson (but anacondas are strictly aquatic, and the hut isn't on a riverbank).

In *Moving Mountain* (1926), Bomba encounters a deadly *jararaca*³ 200 feet up in a tree. (A tree that tall would require a trunk with considerable diameter near the base to support its weight; such smooth-barked rain forest trees have no limbs for quite some distance from the base, so neither Bomba nor the viper would have been able to climb it.) In later books, Rockwood incorrectly applies the name *jararaca* to the South American rattlesnake (which is not known to occur in the Amazon basin). The author's geographic confusion is also seen in his references to pythons in South America and boa constrictors in Africa. And, as if the real snakes of South America didn't provide enough plot opportunities, Rockwood creates two entirely fictitious species: "water snakes whose one bite kills" and the black snakes with orange stripes that live deep underground in *Underground River*.

Once Bomba leaves South America, the author puts less emphasis on encounters with snakes, but when he does so the fallacies continue. He states that the mamba is a cobra (they are in the same family, but mambas—unlike cobras—cannot spread a hood), that it has a lance-like head (vipers have a lance-like head, mambas do not), and that its bite is always fatal. (It is a dangerous

snake, but this statement is an exaggeration.) Rockwood's gift for exaggeration and lurid prose is again evident in the following passage from *Trapped by the Cyclone* (1935):

The sea was alive with snakes! Long, lithe bodies, eight or ten feet in length, capped with wicked looking heads, their open mouths showing poisonous fangs, their eyes malignant fires.

He goes on to say that there is nothing more dangerous in the Indian Ocean. However, no sea snake is known to exceed six feet in length, the head is scarcely distinct from the body, and they don't open their mouths except in the act of biting.

Let us conclude the serpentine portion of this article. In *Strange Land* (1931), we are told that a small tree snake "wound about the neck of the savage, sinking poisoned fangs into ebony flesh." (I know of no venomous snake that wraps around its prey or enemy.) In *River Demons* (1933), Bomba encounters a swarm of ten-foot-long venomous snakes (black with yellow stripes) in an African river. (No African venomous snake reaches that length or has that color pattern.) In *Trapped by the Cyclone*, Bomba puts out a bowl of milk to lure a "runaway" python. (Snakes don't drink milk.)

When it comes to crocodilians, Rockwood makes fewer misstatements, probably because there are fewer species from which to choose. He completely misunderstands the nature of their jaws and teeth when he states in the first book that a cayman⁴ has "murderous jaws armed with a score of knives," which if they closed on Bomba "would bite him in half as easily as a pair of shears would snip a thread." (The second passage is actually from *Jaguar Island*, but phrases like these recur so frequently from title to title they are almost interchangeable.) He further refers to the cayman's teeth as gleaming fangs (but none of the teeth conduct venom), and to the crocodile's jaws as being "armed with terrible sawlike teeth" (*The Cannibals* and *The Painted Hunters*, both 1932). Crocodilian teeth are pointed, not bladelike, and function to pierce and hold prey—not to slice or rip its flesh. Smaller prey they swallow whole; larger prey they dismember by twisting off parts or engaging in a tug-of-war with others of their species.

The notion expressed in the first book, that a cayman pursues Bomba through the water with its mouth open certainly creates a dramatic image, but it is a false one. Although crocodilians do possess a valve in the back of the mouth that would prevent flooding, trying to swim rapidly with an open mouth would be hydrodynamically unsound (just think about it) . . . in reality, they only open the mouth at the instant they lunge for their prey.

Whether by caymans in South America or crocodiles in Africa, Bomba often finds himself being chased into the jungle and surrounded by a group of the creatures, usually after they have treed him. In *Underground River*, the author tells us that Bomba knows "they would stay for days, if necessary, believing that he must fall from starvation and exhaustion." Alas for the credibility of this menace, while an individual crocodilian may charge out of the water to seize prey on the bank, it will not chase prey far on land. Moreover, crocodilians do not hunt communally (although in the water more than one may seize the same prey item) and most emphatically they do not tree prey in the jungle. Finally, contrary to Rockwood's assertion in *Giant Cataract* (1926), crocodilians do not have "red and evil eyes."

After the reptiles, mammals are the author's favorite group of hostile wildlife . . . again with considerable damage to the truth. In South America, Bomba is frequently stalked by groups of jaguars (as many as fifty) and pumas (up to six), yet both species are known to be solitary hunters that rarely come in contact with others of their kind save to mate. In *Swamp of Death* (1929), Bomba shinies up a 200-foot-high tree (but see my earlier comments about the impossibility of that feat—even for Bomba) and encounters a jaguar half-way up that follows him almost to the top. (Jaguars are good climbers, but they, too, would find this challenge beyond their abilities.) Rockwood liked this predicament so much he uses it again in *River Demons* (1933), substituting an African leopard and a 150-foot tree (the same objections apply). He also has Bomba attacked by a pair of leopards and they, too, are solitary hunters. In *Painted Hunters*, Bomba refers to the leopard as Cheeta, but the cheetah—although spotted—is not a leopard. In several books, Bomba encounters tigers in Africa (where they do not occur).

On two occasions Bomba is attacked by bats, most notably by vampires in South America. We are told that they start sucking blood from his feet while gently fanning him with their wings to keep him asleep . . . and that their bite causes a strange paralysis. Vampires don't suck blood—they lap it—and I find no mention of the fanning behavior or the paralysis, unless the latter refers to weakness from loss of blood, which would require removal of a large quantity. The greatest danger from vampires is the rabies virus that many carry.

Primates, too, come in for their share of misrepresentation. Bomba's South American monkey friend, Doto, who appears in *Giant Cataract*, is said to be "almost the size of Bomba himself and stronger than the average man". (No monkey is that large or that strong.)

Both Doto and some chimpanzees are said to be eating coconuts in trees (but

coconut trees are found in coastal regions, not in the rain forest—unless cultivated there). A gorilla is referred to as a "cruel man-ape" (actually they are shy and non-aggressive except when threatened), although later Bomba befriends and carries on a conversation with one—as he subsequently does with baboons and chimpanzees. (We are talking detailed and sometimes abstract ideas there, folks, not just conveying a simple notion like "You want banana?")

Rockwood seems to confuse baboons with chimpanzees. He places the former in trees, where they rarely go (baboons are inhabitants of open woodland, savannah, grassland, or rocky hill country—not jungle), and describes one as being powerful enough to knock Bomba unconscious with a single blow. (Baboons are neither large enough nor strong enough to do this though an adult chimp could.) In *Among the Pygmies* (1931), baboons attack a python with clubs and stones. (I know of no evidence for such tool use by baboons.) Later, in *River Demons*, baboons "as large as men" throw *castanha* nuts at Bomba. (Baboons are not that large, and *castanha* nuts⁵ do not grow in Africa.)

The author's sense of mammal distribution is often flawed. An antelope pushes its way through the underbrush in *Lost Explorers*. (There are no antelope in South America.) Twice Bomba and his friends encounter tapirs in Africa. (They only occur in South America.) In *Perilous Kingdom* (1937), a camel heads south into the jungle. (Camels are creatures of the desert, not the rain forest.) Bomba and his party are chased by wild boars in the *Perilous Kingdom*⁶. (The species is not known to occur south of Egypt⁷.)

The author has little to say about birds. His most glaring error in this regard appears in the first book, where we find a band of monkeys in the trees being attacked by a flock of vultures, as a result of which dead monkeys are "piled in heaps". Vultures are scavengers—not hunters—and, contrary to Rockwood's assertion, they do not carry off live lambs—they could never get off the ground with that heavy a burden. They would also have great difficulty getting at the monkeys among the tree branches, and even birds-of-prey don't kill multiple victims. (Once they have subdued their prey, they either consume it on the spot or fly off with it.)

The final bit of biological nonsense is also found in the first book. A scorpion is referred to as an insect which crawls "slimily," and Bomba has to kill the scorpion quickly before it can inject him with the deadly poison of its bite. Scorpions are arachnids (not insects), both insects and arachnids have a dry body covering (not slimy), and a scorpion delivers venom with the stinger at the tip of its tail (not with its mouth).

Let me conclude by saying that most, if not all, of the aforementioned

information would have been available in good non-technical books at the time Rockwood was writing the Bomba series. Among these would have been the books of Raymond L. Ditmars (*The Reptile Book* was published by Doubleday, Page in 1907; even *Reptiles of the World* would have been available from Macmillan in 1933). It seems apparent to me that the author either was extremely careless or else deliberately distorted the truth in an attempt to heighten tension. In either case, he did his young readers a disservice. Ironically, it was all unnecessary . . . for had he but taken the time to research the background for his stories, he would have discovered that the wonders of nature are truly "stranger than fiction".⁸

Endnotes

1. Kent Winslow, "Bomba the Jungle Boy," *Mystery and Adventure Series Review*, no. 12 (Summer 1983): N. pag.
2. I could not find this name in Jonathan A. Campbell and William W. Lamar, *The Venomous Reptiles of Latin America* (Ithaca, NY, 1989). The most similar name listed was *couanacouche*, a name applied in Guyana to the bushmaster, the species that best fits Rockwood's description anyway. Incidentally, in the Amazon basin the bushmaster is called *surucucu*, the name Rockwood applied to the anaconda in the first book.
3. This name is given to a number of pit vipers in Latin America (including the much-feared fer-de-lance), but never to the South American rattlesnake as Rockwood does in three of the books (Campbell and Lamar, *op. cit.*).
4. Rockwood uses "cayman" and "alligator" interchangeably in the first few books, alligator thereafter. Although members of the same family, they are not in the same genus . . . and there are no alligators in South America.
5. *Castanha* nuts are better known as Brazil nuts.
6. Internal evidence suggests that Danakiland, the Perilous Kingdom, may have been based on Ethiopia (which was invaded by Italy in 1935 and held until 1941), and that its Emperor Shona Tongu was modeled after Emperor Haile Selassie.
7. This information, as well as other aspects of mammal lore, was gleaned from Ronald M. Nowak, *Walker's Mammals of the World* (5th ed.) vols. 1 & 2 (Baltimore, MD, 1991).

8. For a good example of a jungle series for boys that achieves adventure and suspense without straying very far from reality, I strongly recommend the Tom Stetson trilogy by John Henry Cutler, published by Whitman (*Tom Stetson and the Giant Jungle Ants*, 1948; *Tom Stetson on the Trail of the Lost Tribe*, 1948; *Tom Stetson and the Blue Devil*, 1951).



THE SERPENT REARED ITS HEAD ABOVE THE WATER

"Bomba the Jungle Boy Trapped by the Cyclone"

Page 192

"PIONEERS, PASSIONATE LADIES, AND PRIVATE EYES": LIBRARY OF CONGRESS TO HOLD SYMPOSIUM

Clark W. Evans
Library of Congress

"Pioneers, Passionate Ladies, and Private Eyes: the Library of Congress Symposium on Dime Novels, Series Books, and Paperbacks" will be held Friday, June 9, and Saturday, June 10, 1995, at the James Madison Building in Washington, D. C. Highlights of the symposium will include plenary sessions at which author Madeleine B. Stern will speak on "Dime Novels by the 'Children's Friend' (Louisa May Alcott)" and Professor Janice A. Radway of Duke University, author of *Reading the Romance*, will talk on "Clearing a Space for Middlebrow Culture: The Struggle Over the Book, 1880-1920." The symposium, sponsored jointly by the Rare Book and Special Collections Division, headed by Dr. Larry E. Sullivan, and The Center for the Book, directed by Dr. John Y. Cole, is the first symposium by these two divisions on popular fiction. There will also be an exhibit highlighting collections of dime novels, series books, and paperbacks housed in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

For those wishing to attend the symposium details about registration may be obtained by writing Clark W. Evans, Senior Reference Specialist, the Rare Book Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. 20540, or by phoning him at (202) 707-2017.

In addition to authors Stern and Radway, twenty other speakers have accepted invitations to present papers, including historian Dr. Leona Rostenberg, who will speak on "The Discovery of Louisa May Alcott's Pseudonym" at the start of Stern's plenary session.

Grouped primarily by genres, the other presenters are:

Dime Novels: Kathleen Chamberlain, Associate Professor of English, Emory and Henry College; Angela Farkas, Teaching Fellow, Department of English, University of Pittsburgh; Deidre A. Johnson, Assistant Professor of English/Children's Literature, West Chester University; and Edward T. LeBlanc, Editor Emeritus, *Dime Novel Round-Up*. Speaking on both dime novels

and series books will be John T. Dizer, Professor and Dean Emeritus, Mohawk Valley Community College.

Series Books: Elizabeth A. Frank, Curator of Large Mammals, Milwaukee County Zoo; Karen Nelson Hoyle, Professor and Curator, Children's Literature Research Collections, University of Minnesota; Alan Pickrell, Professor of English, Emory and Henry College; and David K. Vaughan, Associate Professor of Technical Communication, Air Force Institute of Technology. M. Paul Holsinger, Professor of History, Illinois State University, will speak on both series books and paperbacks.

Two speakers will give papers representing the three genres; they are J. Randolph Cox, Professor and Reference and Government Documents Librarian, St. Olaf College, and Editor, *Dime Novel Round-Up*; and Jean Carwile Masteller, Professor of English, Whitman College.

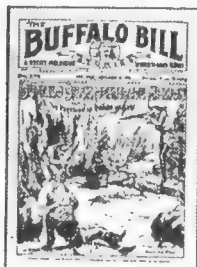
Speakers on availability and preservation of popular culture collections will be: Clark W. Evans of the Library of Congress; Martha Hanson, Preservationist, and Mark F. Weimer, Curator, both of Special Collections at the E. S. Bird Library, Syracuse University; and Alison Scott, Head Librarian, Popular Culture Library, Bowling Green State University.

Other speakers will be Nancy Tillman Romalov, Visiting Assistant Professor, University of Montana; E. M. Sanchez-Saavedra, Writer/Historian; and Lydia Schurman, Professor of English Emerita, Northern Virginia Community College.

Titles of the papers and additional information will appear in the follow up report on the Symposium in the August *Dime Novel Round-Up*.

Members of the Planning Committee for the symposium in addition to Dr. Sullivan, Dr. Cole, and Clark Evans are J. Randolph Cox, Deidre A. Johnson (who deserves credit for thinking up the symposium title), Edward T. LeBlanc, and Lydia Schurman.

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George Munro was one of the five major publishers of dime novels, whose imprint appeared on 39 different series of papercovered books and periodicals between 1863 and 1905. He is remembered for publishing the first dime novel detective story (Kenward Philp's *The Bowery Detective*), the first series of dime novel detective stories with a continuing hero (Old Sleuth), and for establishing and sustaining one of the most successful classic and romance series in the dime novel era (*The Seaside Library*).

George P. Munro was born 12 November 1825 in West River, Nova Scotia. His knowledge of printing and publishing was acquired on the *Pictou Observer*, with the American News Company, and as a clerk with Beadle & Co. He left Beadle in 1863 to form a partnership with Irwin P. Beadle to publish dime novels. The first number of *Irwin P. Beadle's Ten Cent Novels* appeared dated November 11, 1863. After five numbers, Irwin Beadle left Munro and the title of the series was changed to *Munro's Ten Cent Novels* (February 27, 1864). This series of frontier and western stories formed the backbone of George Munro publications for the next five years when he began his popular story paper, the *New York Fireside Companion*. This served to keep the Munro name before the public and to launch one of his most lucrative ventures, the detective serials of Harlan Page Halsey, published over the pseudonym of "Old Sleuth." Reprinted many times, they were first collected in individual volumes beginning in 1885 with the *Old Sleuth Library*. Additional printings of the stories appeared in the papercovered novel *Calumet Series*, which began in 1891. With the success of these editions, new stories were written by Halsey for *Old Sleuth's Own* which was published under the imprint of the Parlor Car Publishing Co. Having established the primacy of the word "sleuth" as a synonym for "detective," Munro went to court on eleven occasions to uphold that claim.

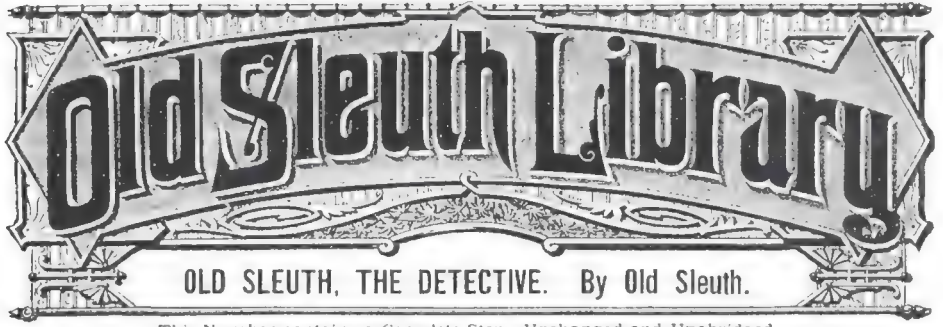
For almost four years (1873-1877), Munro published a story paper for juvenile readers, *Munro's Girls and Boys of America*, the contents of which later went into the *Boys' Dashaway Series* and *Lucky Series*. At about the same time the firm also issued another juvenile story paper called the *Boys' Own* (1873-1876). No issues remain extant of this title.

In 1877, George Munro began his longest running and most significant publishing series, *The Seaside Library*. This was not a dime novel series but was made up primarily of reprinted classic English and American novels and

romance fiction. Prominent among the authors who appeared in this series were Charles Dickens, James Fenimore Cooper, Charlotte M. Braeme, Wilkie Collins, Sir Walter Scott, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, Alexander Dumas, George Eliot, H. Rider Haggard, Thomas Hardy, M. E. Braddon, W. Clark Russell, Emile Gaboriau, and Robert Louis Stevenson. There were both folio and octavo editions, or "ordinary," "pocket," and "25 cent" editions, and the numbers of separate issues ran to over 2,000. International copyright was not the law so Munro was able to publish them in large quantities without much cost beyond that of the printing, binding, and distribution. This class of publication soon outnumbered his dime novel contributions and he largely discontinued the ten cent novel line. The "pocket" edition of the *Seaside Library* lasted until 1905.

As a publisher, George Munro began as a major competitor to his one-time employer, Beadle & Co., with offices on William Street. Later addresses place the firm on Beekman Street and 17 to 27 Vandewater Street. During much of his career he waged a fierce competition for publishing supremacy with his younger brother, Norman L. Munro. George Munro retired from publishing in 1893 with his sons carrying on the business under the imprint George Munro's Sons until May 1906. George Munro died 23 April 1896.

Other publications bearing the Munro imprint include *Munro's Ten Cent Stories* (1863), *Munro's Illustrated Series* (1872), *Munro's Dialogues* (1875-1876), *Munro's Speakers* (1875-1876), *Munro's Backwoods Series* (1876?), *Leisure Hour Library* (1882), *Munro's Railroad Series* (1887), the *Library of American Authors* (1887-1899), the *Laurel Library* (1891-1903), *Parlor Car Series* (1892), *Munro's Library of Popular Novels* (1894-1899), *Majestic Series* (1896), *Giant Series* (1896-1897), *Old Sleuth Special Detective Series* (1897-1898), *Old Sleuth Standard Series* (1897-1898), *Crown Series* (1898), *Royal Series* (1898), *Sweetheart Series* (1898-1903), *Victor Series* (1898), *Ivy Series* (1898-1904), *Savoy Series* (1900-1905), *Munro's Dollar Series* (1878), and *Die Deutsche Library* (1890s). Periodicals published by Munro include *The Contemporary Review* (1878-1883), *The Nineteenth Century* (1878-1883), *The Fortnightly Review* (1878-1883), the *New York Monthly Fashion Bazar* (1879-1885), and the *New York Weekly Fashion Bazar* (1880-1883).



This Number contains a Complete Story, Unchanged and Unabridged.

No. 1

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Old Sleuth, the Detective;

Or, THE BAY RIDGE MYSTERY.

By OLD SLEUTH.



OLD SLEUTH

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THE REFERENCE SHELF

Recent books in review, or forthcoming publications noted.

CREATOR OF DOC SAVAGE

M. Martin McCarey-Laird. *Lester Dent: The Man, His Craft and His Market*. Hidalgo Publishing Co., 1994. 104 p. ISBN 0-961004-9-5. \$11.95

Perhaps because he was more visible than most pulp writers, probably because he was more vivid as a personality, and certainly because he was a better writer than most, Lester Dent has never been forgotten the way most of his fellow pulpsters have been. A sizable percentage of Dent's "Doc Savage" novels (written under the house name of Kenneth Robeson) remain in print, and Dent and Doc Savage have been the subjects of innumerable chapters and articles and at least three books. It would be nice to say that McCarey-Laird's slim volume is a worthy addition to this body of material, but this is sadly not the case: *Lester Dent* is a deeply flawed work.

McCarey-Laird opens *Lester Dent* with "A Brief History of the Pulps," a history that is so riddled with errors as to be useless. Within the space of one page she states that "*Top Notch* magazine appeared in 1903," adding that "Doubleday started *Short Stories Magazine*, in 1910," and that George T. Delacorte introduced to the public "such pulp thrillers as *War Birds* and *Ballyhoo*;" in fact, *Top Notch* started in 1910, *Short Stories* began in 1890, and *Ballyhoo* was a humor magazine, filled with delightfully risqué cartoons and jokes astonishingly similar to those published in *National Lampoon* half a century later. Nor are these errors isolated instances: the following page she misquotes Julian Symons and has Joseph T. Shaw editing the *Black Mask* from 1920-1936.

If one disregards the "Brief History of the Pulps," the remaining six chapters of the volume contain biographical material about Dent and discuss the concept of hero and Dent's compositional philosophy. The moments of interest and insight in these sections, however, come not from McCarey-Laird but from Dent, whose enormously intelligent and energetic personality reveals itself delightfully through the quoted interviews, letters, and articles. Indeed, Dent's ten pieces of advice to Richard Sale (pp. 35-36) could be used profitably by any aspiring writer. McCarey-Laird's prose, on the other hand, lacks Dent's narrative drive, and sentences such as "according to Frank Gruber, in *The Pulp Jungle*, an autobiographical account of his early struggles to break into the pulp

writing market, the base rate of pay at the majority of the pulp magazines was a one-cent word" (p. 9) and "another one thousand established writers sent their manuscripts to New York from various parts of the world, authors like L. Patrick Greene, and the pulp market king, western writer Max Brand" (p. 10) convey their meanings almost by accident and are, alas, entirely typical of McCarey-Laird's writing style.

Not terribly long ago, on the alt.pulps section of the Internet, the publisher of *Lester Dent* informed everyone that the book began its life as a master's thesis at an unspecified university while complaining about reviewers being insensitive and negative. Given the general age of its few citations, it seems likely that the original manuscript of *Lester Dent* was written some years ago and was exhumed to take advantage of a perceived market. This would explain the complete lack of references to the standard Dent biography, Marilyn Cannaday's 1990 *Bigger Than Life: The Creator of Doc Savage* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press) as well as to any recent Dent scholarship. It is therefore astonishing and disturbing that such a shoddily written volume could constitute graduate work, and Dent himself would have been hard put to praise this amateur effort.

Richard Bleiler
University of Connecticut

WE'RE OFF TO OZ!

Peter B. Clarke, comp. *Who's Who, What's What and Where's Where in Oz: The Canon: An Index to the People, Creatures, Things and Places in Oz in the First Forty Books*. Publisher: Arcus Company, 1665 Greenleaf Avenue, Des Plaines, IL 60018-3832. iii + 99 pp. \$11.95 postpaid.

In his *Who's Who* . . . Clarke indexes the first 40 Oz books, indicating the chapter of each in which a character, creature, or place of any importance appears. This ambitious undertaking, with more than 2500 entries, surpasses Jack Snow's *Who's Who in Oz* (1954) which had 600, though Snow included brief biographical sketches of authors and illustrators and summaries of 39 Oz books.

As well as being useful, this index is fun to read. Since it locates the entries in every Oz story in which they appear, it is possible to determine which of Baum's early characters have proved the most popular and durable through 40 Oz books. Who does appear most frequently—is it Dorothy, the Scarecrow, Ozma, or possibly another? Read the index and find out. It is fascinating to

watch the inventiveness of Baum and his successors in their continuous creation of fantasy figures and places.

Clarke refers to the first 40 Oz books as the Oz Canon, and suggests that he may eventually "get to work indexing the Apocrypha." But he omits two Baum titles that are definitely part of the Canon: *The Little Wizard Stories of Oz*, which appeared in 1913 as six booklets and in 1914 as one volume, and "Queer Vistors from the Marvelous Land of Oz", which was a newspaper series (1904-1905) and was later gathered by Martin Williams into *The Third Book of Oz* (1986). It is to be hoped that Clarke will include both in a second edition.

Clarke notes in his introduction that there are errors in his work. He includes an errata sheet, in large part for errors in indexing *The Yellow Knight of Oz*, and plans to update this. With a computer generated index like Clarke's, correction should be made easily.

Indexing takes time, concentration, and hard work. Though there are minor lapses and two notable omissions, Clarke's *Who's Who...* is an excellent index of the Oz books, especially enjoyable for tracing the development of characters, from their first appearance to their most recent, in a magic land that has captured the imaginations of millions of readers.

Ed Lauterbach

MORE PULPS

The Bloody Forty-Five Days, by Curtis Steele (Emile Tepperman) In *Pulp Review* #20 (March 1995). \$6.00, plus \$1.25 postage from The Pulp Collector Press, P.O. Box 3232, Frederick, MD 21705

The third novel in the famous "Purple Invasion" series in the *Operator* #5 magazine, originally published in the issue for October-November 1936. Reproduced here in reduced facsimile. This series story for "sophisticated boys" is well worth the price.

jrc

Behind the Mask, no. 30, January 1995. \$4.85 the copy, \$19.00 for 4 issues, \$28.00 for 6 issues. Tom and Ginger Johnson, 504 E. Morris Street, Seymour, TX 76380.

Reprints pulp stories "Li Shoon's Deadliest Mission" by H. Irving Hancock from *Detective Story Magazine*, September 5, 1916; "Code of the Bat" by C. K. M. Scanlon (probable pseud. of Johnston McCulley) from *Popular Detective*, February 1935; "The Walking Dead" by John K. Butler from *Dime Detective*,

February 1937.

EL

BRITISH SCHOOL BOYS AND SCHOOL STORIES

George Beal. *Magnet and Gem Facsimile Editions: A Guide and Catalogue*. Quatermain Publications, 1994. ISBN 0-9523485 0 0 \$14.00 including postage (48 Kings Drive, Berrylands, Surbiton, Surrey, KT5 8NQ, England)

The most prolific British writer for boys was Charles Hamilton, better known under his pen names of Frank Richards and Martin Clifford. His stories of Harry Wharton & Co., the boys of St. Jim's, and the immortal Billy Bunter have been a British institution for decades. Between 1969 and 1991 more than 200 volumes collected the stories from the pages of *The Magnet*, *The Gem*, and other juvenile weeklies that had originally appeared between 1908 and 1940. This guide to those facsimile editions is fully annotated and illustrated and is recommended for all who appreciate the British school story.

jrc

BOOKS AND PERIODICALS RECEIVED

The Bean Home Newsletter, Vol. 6 no. 4 (Fall/Winter 1994-1995) [Dedicated to the memory of Walter R. Brooks, author of the "Freddy the Pig" series; a publication of The Friends of Freddy; includes a report on the fifth biennial convention and a tribute to the late Dorothy Brooks] Connie Arnold, 5A Laurel Hill Road, Greenbelt, MD 20770-1779

Burroughs Bulletin, no. 21, January 1995 [Published quarterly for members of the (Edgar Rice) Burroughs Bibliophiles] George McWhorter, Curator, The Burroughs Memorial Collection, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY 40292

ECHOES, Vol. 14, no. 2 (April 1995) Whole no. 79 [For pulp magazine collectors; Bill Barnes, Robert E. Howard, Edgar Rice Burroughs, et al in this issue] Fading Shadows, Inc. 504 E. Morris Street, Seymour, TX 76380

The Horatio Alger Society Newsboy, Vol. 33, no. 1 (January-February 1995) [For collectors of Horatio Alger and other juvenile series authors] Robert E. Kasper, 585 E. St. Andrews Drive, Media, PA 19063

Martha's KidLit Newsletter, Vol. 7, no. 1 (Winter 1995) [For Collectors of Out Of Print Children's Books; Winter issue has an emphasis on Gene Stratton-Porter] Martha Rasmussen, Box 1488, Ames, IA 50014

The Mystery & Adventure Series Review, no. 27 (Spring 1995) ["devoted to the re-reading and preservation of series books and their lore"] Fred Woodworth, P. O. Box 3488, Tucson, AZ 85722

Pulp Review, no. 21 (1995) [Facsimile editions of pulp magazine fiction; this issue features "America's Plague Battalions", the next in the **Operator #5 Purple Invasion** series, originally published December 1936] Adventure House (formerly Pulp Collector Press), P.O. Box 3232, Frederick, MD 21705-3232

The Susabella Passengers and Friends, January & March 1995 [A nostalgia publication for collectors of the Beverly Gray mystery series plus all other children's series books] Garrett Lothe, 80 Ocean Pines Lane, Pebble Beach, CA 93953

The Whispered Watchword, Vol. #95-2 (March 1995) [Newsletter of the Society of Phantom Friends; emphasis on Betty Cavanna in this issue] Kate Emburg, 4100 Cornelia Way, N. Highlands, CA 95660

The Yellowback Library, No. 128 & 129 (Feb & March 1995) [Series Books, dime novels, and related literature; the February issue reprints part of a Stratemeyer dime novel] Gil O'Gara, P. O. Box 36172, Des Moines, IA 50315

Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan: The Lost Adventure*, nos. 1 & 2 [of 4] (January & February 1995) [An uncompleted, unpublished manuscript by ERB, "adapted and expanded" by Joe R. Lansdale and published in pulp magazine format] Dark Horse Comics, Inc, 10956 SE Main Street, Milwaukee, OR 97222; \$2.95 per issue.

John T. Dizer, "The Way It Was: The Birth and Boyhood of *Boys' Life*," *Scouting* (November-December 1994): 16, 41.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Eddie LeBlanc's superb work on *Dime Novel Sketches* is hard to match, but in this instance SKETCH #270: **The Flashlight Detective Series**, I believe should be emended regarding the date(s) of publication. I have a catalog of paperback books in print, the introduction to which is dated March 1905, wherein the first 100 books of **The Flashlight Detective Series** are listed. It would be my educated guess that this series was published ca. 1904-1905, probably in batches of 50.

Victor Berch
Marlboro, MA

My compliments on the job you are doing. I continue to enjoy the Round-Up, as ever. Maybe you could run a column from Eddie LeBlanc on occasion.

Paul F. Miller
Vienna, OH

Ed: We will speak with Eddie about that idea. At present he is busy revising his bibliographies of dime novel series as well as supplying the magazine with material for the "Dime Novel Sketches" on the cover.

I am enclosing a \$15.00 check to renew my subscription. You are doing a great job. That was a nice "quake" report by Didi. See you in Philly.

Henri Achee
Houston, Texas

Ed: Thank you for your continued support and a reminder that the next gathering of the dime novel, series book, and pulp magazine "clan" will be at the Marriott Hotel in Philadelphia, April 12-15.

I was very offended by Deidre Johnson's omission of my name in her report on the Series Book Collectors in Earthquake Land Convention.

She wrote, "The afternoon session began with Dave Farah's interview with Rudy Nappi, again followed by a question-and-answer session with the audience." In a similar fashion, she could have written, "The Saturday afternoon session included Greg Jackson, Jr.'s interview with Frankie Thomas, again followed by a question-and-answer session with the audience." Instead, her paragraph on Frankie Thomas ignored my presence.

Frankie Thomas had turned down several previous requests to attend series book conventions. It was through my persuasion that he agreed to attend the Buena Park convention. I arranged everything with convention organizer Dan Josslin. And Frankie *insisted* that I go to the convention and conduct the interview with him. Frankie, his lovely wife, Virginia, and I had a grand time at the convention. Frankie enjoyed it so much that he and Virginia will attend Don Phelps' Adventure Book Quest Series Book Convention in Plymouth, Massachusetts at the end of April.

Greg Jackson, Jr.
Los Angeles, CA

Ed: Thank you for allowing us to set the record straight. Any omission of credit was unintentional.

Thanks [for the subscription renewal reminder]! DNR is off to a great "new beginning". Now—may we have a membership list? It's long overdue.

Thomas J. Mulcahy
Lakeland, FL

Ed: Glad you like the new format. Yes, the last Membership List was printed in 1991. We will try to have one to distribute with the June issue and then keep them coming on a regular basis. How often would you like these?

Thank you for your letter of 2 October 1994, in which you call our attention to the unconscionable lack of coverage of the *Dime Novel Round-Up* in the *MLA International Bibliography*. Please accept my apologies, as well as my assurance that every issue of the *Dime Novel Round-Up* received in our office since 1989 will be indexed in the 1994 bibliography.

As you know, we rely to a large extent on complimentary subscriptions for our journal coverage. I hope we can count on your continued support.

Terence Ford
Director of the Center for Bibliographical Services
Editor, *MLA International Bibliography*

Ed: This is indeed good news and a welcome sequel to our note in the Letters column in the February issue. This will make what we do here more accessible to anyone interested in dime novels, series books, and pulp magazines.

NOTES & QUERIES

Loss. We are saddened by the passing of Frank Acker, a longtime subscriber to the *Dime Novel Round-Up*. Captain Acker (1909-1995) was a collector of Gilbert Patten and his article, "Gilbert Patten: The Man and His Magic" appeared in these pages in 1966. In 1972 he was interviewed for an article about Frank Merriwell by *Yankee*. See the March issue of *Yellowback Library* for a fine tribute to Captain Acker by Gil O'Gara.

Corrections Dept. Charlie Shibuk notes that the definite article was dropped from the title of D. W. Griffith's famous film in the article on the Young Wild West films in our last issue. It should have been "*The Birth of a Nation*." The title of the first collection of Louisa May Alcott thrillers (see **The Reference Shelf**, p. 17) should also have had a different article: *Behind a Mask*.

Sequels. With reference to the Young Wild West films, Victor Berch has located reviews of the series which we will share with you in a future issue. Perhaps we can decide whether or not the loss of the films is to be regretted. (Another reason to keep your subscription current, you want to avoid missing any part of these developments.)

Nancy Drew in Art. Artist Laura Ruby will have a solo exhibition of her "Nancy Drew Series" of serigraphs, along with an interactive installation sculpture based on her Nancy Drew prints at the Honolulu Academy of Arts, 900 S. Beretania Street, from April 20 to June 11, 1995. The opening reception will take place on Wednesday, April 19, 1995, from 6-7:30 p.m. The artist will give a talk on the Nancy Drew prints and sculpture in the Academy Theatre Sunday, April 23, 1995 at 2 p.m.—free to the public. Laura Ruby's "Nancy Drew Series" deals with themes of the artist as detective, as well as a variety of themes from literature and popular culture, including movies, music, architecture, and dance. Her installation sculpture invites viewer participation in finding clues in the gallery and even elsewhere throughout the Honolulu Academy of Arts.

Assistance Requested. Bill Jackson is looking for a short story in a Street & Smith pulp magazine from the 1930s. He thinks the story was called "Thirteen

Aboard the *Olympia*" and was based on a real life mass murder at sea in the Western Caribbean, June 30, 1905. The story is illustrated with a picture of a large man holding a Winchester rifle; he is standing on the deck of a boat. Can any of our pulp collectors help? Write Bill at 120 Kansas Street, Geneva, IL 60134.

The Year for Louisa May Alcott. Last issue we expressed a desire to see all of Louisa May Alcott's sensational thrillers collected in one volume. Sometimes wishes do come true. Information about several new Alcott publications (including the one-volume edition of the thrillers) has been provided to Lydia Schurman in a letter from Madeleine B. Stern, who granted permission for *DNR* to publish it.

1. *Louisa May Alcott Unmasked: Collected Thrillers*, an omnibus volume, edited by and with an introduction by Madeleine B. Stern, scheduled for publication in May 1995. (This collects all 33 of the stories.)

2. *Lost Stories by Louisa May Alcott*, scheduled for publication by Carol Publishing Group in February 1995. This is a re-titled paperback edition of *From Jo March's Attic*, edited by Madeleine B. Stern and Daniel Shealy, the hardcover edition was published in 1994 by Northeastern University Press.

3. *Behind a Mask: The Unknown Thrillers of Louisa May Alcott*, with a brief afterword by Madeleine B. Stern, scheduled for publication by William Morrow in the fall of 1995. This is a reprint of the first collection of thrillers discovered and edited by Stern, originally issued in 1975.

4. *Modern Magic*, a series of five Alcott thrillers selected by Stern and with an introduction by her, to be published in the Modern Library edition to be issued by Random House in the fall of 1995. At the same time Random House plans to issue *The Long Fatal Love Chase*, a previously unpublished novel.

5. *A Marble Woman*, to be published by Avon in the fall of 1995 is a paperback re-issue of *Plots and Counterplots: More Unknown Thrillers of Louisa May Alcott*, edited by Stern and originally published by William Morrow in 1976.

Dime Novelist on Television. There is a new television series which readers of this magazine should find interesting. "Legend", starring Richard Dean Anderson, will debut on the UPN network in April. Anderson plays Ernest Pratt, a nineteenth century writer of dime novels, who assumes the identity of one of his characters, the scientific adventurer Nicodemus Legend. A two hour pilot is scheduled for Tuesday, April 18.

LITERARY REFERENCES

An occasional column of passages describing dime novels, series books, and pulp magazines, selected from literature, scholarly journals, and the popular press

The following is from illustrator Roger Duvoisin's 1948 Caldecott acceptance speech for *White Snow Bright Snow* [Bertha Mahoney Miller and Elinor Whitney Field, eds., *Caldecott Medal Books: 1938-1957* (Boston: Horn Book, Inc, 1957): 171-172.]

I remember a talk I heard at the last annual children's book exhibition at the New York Library by Mr. Donald Adams, and with which I completely agree. He said that the books we remember and love best are the purely imaginative stories. And even history can be presented in an imaginative way like fiction, while keeping an eye on the accuracy of the statements.

Stories, short, up-to-date, and extraordinarily abundant—unfortunately also too often coarse, silly and tough—are what they find in comics. But it is possible to combine good taste with this abundance, and it is my dream to find the time and the talent to do some good books which can compete in a child's estimation with the comics.

I can find a good example in my own boyhood reading of how and why illustrated literature may be preferred to the best, and its effect. The classic struggle which takes place in many homes between children who try to smuggle in this literature and the parents who try to weed it out was going on in our own home between my father, my brother and me.

There was at that time a cheap little publication which caused the despair of parents with its popularity among children. It cost two cents and for that small sum we could plunge into the weekly illustrated paradise of shooting and extravagant rides, hair-raising murder and adventures, the hero of which was Texas Jack, the pitiless enemy of criminal cowboys and outlaws (pronounced in French *cove-boas* and *ootlavs*). It was the Heigh-Ho Silver of those days. It must have been written and illustrated by a Frenchman who had never come to America and his stories were all the more fanciful and unhampered by true facts. None of the lessons of history about America which we had in school could affect our extraordinary and over-romantic conception of the land of perpetual and gorgeous adventures.

If Texas Jack always got his man, my father, who was after his skin to burn it in the living room tile stove, never got him. Texas Jack always won gloriously. All the tricks that my father concocted to track him down failed. One favorite and safe place to read Texas Jack was in the century-old branches of a

cedar tree which served as the headquarters of the neighborhood boys. As a matter of fact, the West is vaguely associated in my mind with the old cedar tree—or we would read it in bed when my father seemed safely asleep. When he found that out and arranged to control our bedroom lights from his own bedroom, I discovered an easy solution! There was a light which my father could never control. That was the moonlight. My bed being near the window, I discovered that a moderately large moon could well light the pulp pages, if the sky was clear enough. And it was the very same moon, I thought with delight, which would a few hours later light the mysterious prairie home of Texas Jack. It's due, no doubt, partly to these pleasant nights by the window that I owe the present need for eyeglasses.

Well, we never missed an issue of Texas Jack. And as I said, all our history lessons never stamped out completely our Texas-Jack conception of America, because history was presented to us a dead thing. Texas Jack, cheaply written as the story was, was alive. When I came to America a few years later, it was not in the land of Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln that I landed—it was in the land of Texas Jack. And to this day, since I have never been to the Southwest, my idea of that country is colored by Texas Jack, right or wrong. As a matter of fact, I think that that conception would even survive a visit to the West, so deeply have these wild fictions taken root in my memory.

I remember that when I first visited the Adirondacks, I expected to find something similar to the image I had formed in my mind when reading Fenimore Cooper who was, after Texas Jack, one of my favorite authors about America. . .

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Dime Novel Round-Up

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We welcome articles on any aspect of the areas of dime novels (1860-1915), juvenile series books (1850-1945), and pulp magazines (1896-1950). Scholarly articles, reports of significant research, notes, and book reviews are needed. Manuscripts normally should not exceed 10 typed pages in length although longer ones will be considered. Notes and reviews should be no more than 500 words, feature articles no more than 2,500 words.

All pages must be typewritten or computer printed, double-spaced. Computer users should include a copy on diskette, preferably in WordPerfect 5.1 or ASCII format. Illustrations that accompany a manuscript should be black and white photographs or sharp xeroxes in color or black and white.

Whenever possible your style, bibliography, and notes should be in accordance with the *Chicago Manual of Style* (14th edition) or *The MLA Style Manual* (1985). The exception is a citation to dime novels where Albert Johannsen's *House of Beadle & Adams* (1950) is the preferred format.

Please submit your manuscripts to the office of the editor. Since manuscripts are submitted to one or more outside reviewers, please allow at least three months for a decision.

Dime Novel Round-Up
J. Randolph Cox, Editor
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